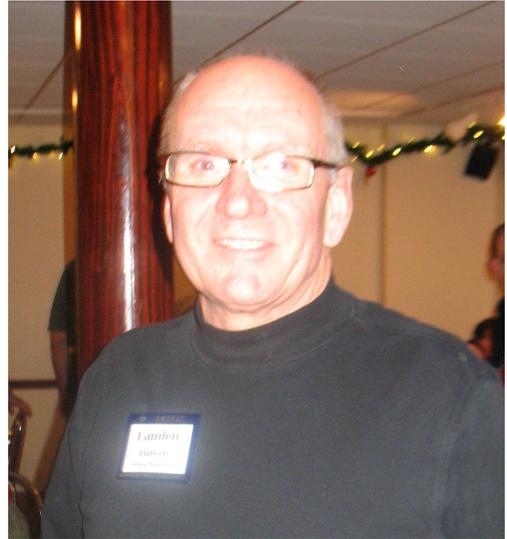


Member Spotlight

Damien Flaherty

Damien Flaherty is a new member of the club having joined this past year. About a year ago he got the old car bug and found this 1957 Roadmaster 75 over in Indiana. He looked on the internet to see if there was a local Buick club and was able to contact John Lasinski to get some information and knowledge. John forwarded the request to Ted Becker, to advise him on all things 57 Buick. The picture below is of the car sitting in Adam Martin's driveway when it was brought home from its former resting spot.



Damien began life in Waterbury, Connecticut, the son of a school teacher and one of 6 siblings. Though he attended and graduated from high school in Waterbury, he had the wonderful experience of living in Spain for one year while his dad was on a teaching sabbatical. Learning to speak the language, he became interested enough in languages to later receive a degree in French and Spanish language from the University of Connecticut.

Damien grew up interested in cars, as were most boys of that era. Being of a large family, he had to be resourceful in creating his own spending money, so he toiled through many projects and part time jobs during his school years. He had a paper route that included the “Auto Row” in Waterbury that gave him the opportunity to regularly look in showroom windows and dream of one day owning one of these masterpieces. His dad, being an academic, had little interest or knowledge of cars or anything mechanical. His fascination with these new cars, however, created a desire in Damien to learn how they work and fix them. That eventually lead to a job in a gas station where he was able to do oil changes and minor repairs. The more he did, the better he got and was able to advance to more challenging projects.

Infused with his new knowledge, he bought a 1962 Willys wagon. On a trip to Vermont, the engine expired and he had to tow the car home behind a U-Haul truck. That is quite a story that only Damien can do justice to retell. He got it repaired and sold that car. That lead to another “fix and sell”, which lead to another, and another, etc. Over the years, he estimates that he has owned over 35 cars and 7 motorcycles.



Perhaps his most interesting car was a 1955 Citroen 2CV that he bought while in Europe with his family. Those cars are amazingly simple and very cleverly created. There is no gas gauge, but rather a leather dipstick that sits in the gas tank. The windshield wipers are driven off the speedometer cable causing the wiper speed to be equivalent to vehicle speed. Not much use when sitting at a stoplight, but — whatever!!! The engine is a mere 425cc producing roughly 15HP and a top speed of 50MPH. Though anemic performance by any measure, it did get him all over Europe on various sightseeing adventures.



After graduation from college, he decided to seek employment in the area of industrial sales. He landed a job with Anaconda Metal Hose Company. They make that flexible hose that can be used in many, mostly high temperature, applications such as the external exhaust piping on Cord automobiles. While on his training program, he was required to learn to TIG weld the flexible portion to a fitting for use in the final application.



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After a few years of that, he moved to Denver to work for Gates Rubber Co. in international sales, thus using his foreign language skills. While in Denver, he went on a company ski club vacation where he met his future wife, Amy. Damien and Amy now have 3 children, 2 girls and a boy. Their oldest daughter has one son and another due to enter the world in the next few weeks.

After 7 years with Gates, he was coerced to join a startup company with an assignment in St Louis. The plan was to do that for a few years and then head back to Denver. Well, 26 years later, he is still here, so it looks like he'll stay.

His current employment is with a company that leases equipment for environmental testing. The equipment is pretty expensive to purchase and not used regularly, so it behooves the users to lease for short term projects and not have to deal with calibration and maintenance.

A few years back, he decided to get a car that brought him back to the days of his youth. Remembering the 2CV, he wanted to buy a 1955 car. Buick's caught his eye, so that was his main focus. Scouring Ebay and Craigslist for a few years, he finally found his current 1957 Roadmaster 75 on a farm in Indiana. Not a 1955, but close enough. Negotiations with the owner and hearing details of the car, lead him to borrow a trailer from Adam Martin and trek over to Indiana to buy the car if it met his expectations. The car, as is usually the case, was not exactly as described, but still worth purchasing. The car came back to Adam's place and enough work was performed on the car to make it somewhat roadworthy. The engine runs well (of course it does, it's a Nailhead!), the brakes work and it steers straight. He put on the new hood that came with the car and bought a rear window from a salvage yard that cost him more to ship than to buy. Exhaust system is next on the list and, now that decent weather is finally upon us, will be completed in the near future.

Welcome to Buick Land, Damien. We're happy to have you among us now!